ENGAGING OLDER VOLUNTEERS

*There are a huge number of older or retired people available on our communities and it is essential that we tap into these people as future volunteers in our clubs. This information sheet will provide you with some tips on engaging with older people in your area.*

**Why Involve Older Volunteers in Your Club?**

* Older volunteers bring a wealth of experience and knowledge to your organisation. These volunteers could be looking for activities to be involved in prior or after their retirement or enhancing their skills to look for employment
* Older volunteers are more likely to give their time regularly and consistently and remain committed to the club
* People who have retired are always looking for ways to participate in their communities
* Older people are particularly interested in using their existing skills and experience to contribute to the community

As well as the experience the older volunteers bring to your club they may also gain benefits themselves. Promoting these benefits during recruitment is a great way to engage with volunteers.

**Benefits Gained by the Older Volunteers**

* Volunteering boosts happiness. Numerous studies that have investigated the link between volunteering and mental health have found the sense of personal accomplishment gained from volunteering has a positive effect, particular for older volunteers
* Volunteers report fewer symptoms of anxiety and depression and a higher level of satisfaction with their lives
* Volunteers can maintain their interests and support the club and sport they are passionate about

**Why do Older People get Involved in Volunteering?**

* Help others in the community
* Gain personal satisfaction and enjoyment
* Obtain training and additional employment-related skills
* Moving from work to retirement
* Obtaining new skills and gaining new experiences
* Meeting new friends and remaining active in the community

**What can Your Club do to Attract Older Volunteers?**

* Ensure that your policies and procedures are fair and open to all people
* Be as adaptable as possible. Offer flexible options to fit in with the volunteer’s lifestyle
* Match the volunteer’s skills with the volunteering opportunity. This will be rewarding for both the volunteer and the club
* Provide opportunities for older volunteers to pass on their professional skills through teaching, coaching and mentoring. This will also assist with the retention of volunteers

**Tips for Attracting and Retaining Older Volunteers**

* Word of mouth is the most common method of recruiting older volunteers
* Consider new avenues for finding older volunteers such as local groups, social clubs, newspapers and radio
* Be available to talk face to face as not all people will have access to a computer or the internet.
* Ask your older volunteers to help evaluate any club programmes to assist you to improve and develop as they are a valuable resource
* Emphasise the opportunity to meet new people as well as assisting in the community. Volunteering is a good way to develop new social networks, which is particularly important to people who may be making the transition to retirement